



Photo by TSgt. Eifren Lopez (U.S. Air Force)

By MAJ David Haynes

Historical perspective. The discussion of why we are now fighting a world war with a transnational Islamist group can be traced as far back as those practicing Christianity, Judaism and Islam have recorded history. For the purposes of this paper, the discussion is confined to World War I and beyond with a specific focus on the Middle East.

World War I. As the “Great War” came to a close, the end of colonialism began to draw near. The administration of colonies proved expensive in terms of personnel and money to the European and other powers that kept them. As an increasing number of Arab and Muslim lands gained independence in the interwar years, the European powers were reluctant to give up their influence in the region due to the economic impact of the trade routes and the discovery of oil. The Balfour Declaration and a host of meddling in countries from Egypt to Iran and Yemen to Afghanistan by Western powers from 1917 onward created a pro Zionist and anti-Islamic perception of Westerners and their governments among many in the Muslim world (See Charles Messenger’s book *The Century of Warfare: Worldwide Conflict from 1900 to the Present*).

Influences. The other catalysts for birthing extremism during this time were the close associations that rising Islamists were forging with fascists in Europe in the period between the first two World Wars. In the 1920s and 1930s, two influential leaders in the Muslim world sought favor from a likeminded force in the west, Adolph Hitler.

Mohammad Amin al-Husayni, the Mufti of Jerusalem, was active in the protest against the British Mandate of Palestine and very anti-Semitic. Husayni was so enthralled with Nazism that he recruited, trained and commanded Muslims in the Balkans as part of the Waffen-SS during World War II (Messenger). He identified greatly with the tenets of fascism and, like Muslim Brotherhood founder Hassan al-Banna, began to create a fascist view of Islam’s existence juxtaposed Israel and the West.

In his book *The Anatomy of Fascism*, Robert Paxton describes some of the distinguishing characteristics of a fascist movement. “Sense of overwhelming crisis beyond traditional solutions primacy of the group to which one’s duties are superior to every right, whether collective or individual and subordination of the individual to it. Belief that the group is a victim, or a sentiment that justifies any action sans moral or legal, limits against its enemies internal

and external. Dread of the group’s decline under the corrosive effects of individualistic liberalism, class conflict and alien influence. The need for closer integration of a purer community by consent if possible or by exclusionary violence if necessary. The need for authority by natural chiefs culminating in a chieftain who is capable of incarnating the group’s destiny. The beauty of violence and the efficacy of will when they are devoted to the group’s success. The right of the chosen people to dominate others without restraint from any kind of human or divine law, right being decided by the sole criterion of the group’s prowess within a Darwinian struggle” (220).

The linkage of the jihadists with fascism is easily seen and heard from their own propaganda in films like *Obsession* where you see each one of the tenets listed by Paxton displayed in Muslim media and education, and the jihadist are intent on making this the mainstream version of Islam. This adaptation of fascist thought has galvanized jihadist with two opponents and scapegoats to blame their problems and target for attacks, Israel and the West. The evolution of Jihadist Islam gives an indicator into an avenue to defeat it, which will be discussed later.

Muslim Brotherhood. The establishment of the Muslim Brotherhood was as a po-

litical organization, which, at first, may have sounded like a labor union, but it was wrapped in the shroud of ultra conservative religious belief. Hassan al-Banna, founder, believed by returning to a life of true Islamic following circumstance would improve for Muslims. Pan-Arabism and Pan-Islamis rose in the early days of the brotherhood as well, but the underlying tenet was the dictum that all facets of life come from the Quran. The organization went operational in 1954 with an attempt to assassinate Gamal Abdel Nasser, secularist President of Egypt (www.fas.org/irp/world/para/mb.htm).

The Muslim Brotherhood continues to operate and can be tied directly to the formation of al-Qaeda. Sayyid Qutb is often spoken of as another founder of jihadist ideology. His influence was so strong that jihadism is often called Qutbism. Qutb succeeded al-Banna as the brain of the Muslim Brotherhood understudy of al-Banna. Qutb's influence permeates much of the jihadist culture and is responsible for perhaps the two most dangerous men to study Qutbism. Ayman al-Zawahiri was so strongly influenced by the writings of Qutb that he joined the Muslim Brotherhood and later formed the group known as the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, which assassinated Egyptian President Anwar Sadat in 1981 (www.fas.org/irp/world/para/mb.htm). Qutb's influence was also present in the radicalization of Osama bin Laden, who studied under Sayyid's brother Mohammed Qutb at a university in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Osama bin Laden left within a month of the Soviets invading Afghanistan to see if this was a front for jihad (See Marc Sageman's *Understanding Terror Networks*, 26-29).

Al-Qaeda. Bin Laden teamed up with Sheikh doctor Abdullah Azzam and they formed the Afghan Service Bureau, MAK, as a force provider of mujahedin. Azzam recruited many Muslim Brotherhood members for service in the jihad against the Soviets. Later, the two fought side by side and purportedly spoke often with Azzam, providing the initial idea for forming al-Qaeda. Azzam and bin Laden forged the beginnings of al-Qaeda in 1987 and 1988. From its inception, bin Laden thirsted for power over the MAK and al-Qaeda. Bin Laden eventually broke from Azzam and stood-up his own training camps. When Azzam died, parts of MAK joined bin Laden, but the Azzam loyalists continued to quarrel with bin Laden (See Rohan Gunaratna's *Inside Al Qaeda*, 22).

Ayman al-Zawahiri met bin Laden for the first time not long after his acquittal from charges in the assassination of President Sadat in 1985. The meeting was in Peshawar,

Pakistan, where Zawahiri looked to fund the jihad and care for wounded mujahedin. Bin Laden was quite impressed with Zawahiri. Zawahiri occupies the post as leader of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad and is Osama bin Laden's deputy in al-Qaeda.

Their nascent jihadist organization had yet to declare war on America; they were busy with a war against the Soviets with indirect help from the U.S. In February 1989 when the Soviets withdrew from Afghanistan, bin Laden returned to Saudi Arabia with much respect. He helped Saudi intelligence provoke unrest against the communist regime in Yemen and returned to his family's construction business. But the warrior inside yearned for more fighting.

War on the West. On Aug. 2, 1990 when Iraqi forces invaded Kuwait, he offered his services to the Royal Saudi Family. Bin Laden was snubbed for a coalition of U.S., European and Arab troops. This act by the Royal Saudi Family turned his allegiance, and bin Laden began a campaign against the Saudi monarchy and espoused the removal of all Western leaning secular governments in Muslim lands and the expulsion of all infidels from the Holy Land. Al-Qaeda declared war on the West in 1991, but we did not listen for another 10 years (Gunaratna, 22).

In denial. Much like World War II where the indicators were present, governments did not want to lend credence to the threat, but, rather, appease it. The West is in denial as to the gravity of the threat of

radical Islam. The indicators are present; their desires are not secret. Indeed, the ideas have been proffered through media outlets. Yassin Musharbash, a staff writer for the German news publication "Spiegel Online" told how a Jordanian journalist talked about al-Qaeda's strategic vision through conversations with Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi while they shared some time in prison. Musharbash recounts the following phases in Fouad Hussein's book *al-Zarqawi: al-Qaida's Second Generation*.

Predictions. The first phase – known as "the awakening" – has already been carried out and was supposed to have lasted from 2000 to 2003, or more precisely from the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001 to the fall of Baghdad in 2003. The aim of the September 11 attacks was to provoke the U.S. into declaring war on the Islamic world and, thereby, "awakening Muslims."

According to Hussein, the first phase was judged by the strategists and masterminds behind al-Qaida as very successful. He wrote, "The battlefield was opened up and the Americans and their allies became a closer and easier target." The terrorist network also is reported as being satisfied its message can now be heard "everywhere."

The second phase – "opening eyes" – is, according to Hussein's definition, the period between 2003 and 2006. Hussein says that the terrorists hope to make the Western conspiracy aware of the "Islamic community." Hussein believes this is a phase in which al-Qaida wants an organization to



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develop into a movement. The network banked on recruiting young men during this period. Iraq was to become the center for all global operations with an “army” set up there and bases established in other Arabic states.

The third phase – “arising and standing-up” – is supposed to last from 2007 to 2010. “There will be a focus on Syria,” Hussein prophesies, based on what his sources told him. The fighting cadres are supposedly already prepared and some are in Iraq. Attacks on Turkey and – even more explosive – in Israel are predicted. Al-Qaida’s masterminds hope attacks on Israel will help the terrorist group become a recognized organization. The author also believes countries neighboring Iraq – such as Jordan – are also in danger.

The fourth phase is predicted between 2010 and 2013. Hussein wrote al-Qaida will aim to bring about the collapse of the hated Arabic governments. The estimate is that “the creeping loss of the regimes’ power will lead to a steady growth in strength within al-Qaida.” At the same time, attacks will be carried out against oil suppliers, and the U.S. economy will be targeted using cyber terrorism.

The fifth phase will be the point at which an Islamic state, or caliphate, can be declared. According to the plan, between 2013 and 2016, Western influence in the Islamic world will be so reduced and Israel weakened so much, that resistance will not be feared. Al-Qaida hopes by then the Islamic state will be able to bring about a new world order.

Hussein believes during the sixth phase from 2016 onwards there will be a period of “total confrontation.” As soon as the caliphate has been declared, the “Islamic army” will instigate the “fight between the believers and the non-believers,” which has so often been predicted by Osama bin Laden.

The seventh phase is described as “definitive victory.” Hussein wrote in the terrorists’ eyes, because the rest of the world will be so beaten down by the “1.5 billion Muslims,” the caliphate will undoubtedly succeed. According to Hussein, this phase should be complete by 2020, and predicts the war won’t last longer than two years.

Surreptitious creation. The West is a victim of its own success in “World War III,” by so fervently opposing the Soviets that we helped the mujahedin and surreptitiously turned our backs on them, creating a deadly group of warriors with a religious calling to fight. In

search of an enemy, they found one when we ventured back into their lands at their request. While, from our perspective, we did not ask for “World War IV,” we are in it and the road to victory will be long.

The fight. Seth Jones and Martin Libicki, terrorism specialists with *The Rand Corporation*, a non-profit think tank helping to improve policy and decision making through objective research and analysis, propose all terrorist groups end because they use violence to achieve a political goal and seek political change. Jones and Libicki say most terrorist groups have ceased to exist because they joined the political process or were ferreted out by local police and intelligence and were either arrested or killed. The essence of what defeats terrorist groups who do not normalize into the political process needs to incorporate all the elements of national power – diplomatic, information, military and economic

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– with the addition of intelligence operations and police work.

Policing and intelligence operations. A comprehensive strategy to combat al-Qaida and its affiliates is necessary. This is a whole of government approach that must be linked and synergized from the international level down to the local level. Jones and Libicki offer a two-front strategy. The first front is the policing and intelligence operations – an interagency effort – that must be mounted to share the requisite intelligence here and abroad to identify and track key leaders and their networks, exploit the intelligence gained and arrest them as the situation develops and warrants action. This will necessitate a decreased focus on counterterrorism by the Department of Defense and directing more resources to the agencies that conduct security cooperation such as the Central Intelligence Agency, Department of Justice and Depart-

ment of State. This is the long fight of the war because the intelligence network creation and intelligence gathering rely largely on human intelligence. These assets can take considerable time to develop (123).

Military force. The second front consists of the employment of military forces where al-Qaida is participating in or fomenting an insurgency. This does not necessarily mean that general purpose forces from the U.S. need be involved. Local forces can be augmented with Special Operations Forces and/or intelligence services to combat terrorist led insurgencies.

The use of local forces is optimum to the cessation of an insurgency since the indigenous forces must eventually be capable of securing the country themselves. Local forces have the home field advantage in intelligence collection and knowledge of the terrain. Legitimacy with the population of the local security forces can be a consideration for/against using the local forces. The situation will dictate; however, an indigenous force is best, (136-138).

The U.S. government should consider the cost benefit of responding with regular forces against terrorist threats. They arguably lend credence to their claim we are on another crusade to conquer Muslim lands. It also gives a focal point for recruitment of jihadists.

Information operations. The third front is the information operations. The West must counter the ideology of jihadism. Tacit approval by non-violent people is as bad or worse than complicit action. The West is easily 30 years behind in the propaganda campaign against the jihadists. They have had time to grow a generation that chants death to America, death to the United Kingdom and death to Israel (*Obsession*). But Westerners have no credibility in the Muslim world when issues of the Zionist conspiracy are discussed.

We must identify groups and leaders who are moderate in tone and supportive of peace and reconciliation. These can be tribal elders, respected journalists, clerics or anyone of influence. We must coopt these people and any organization to espouse our message through their words within the existing political, cultural, social and media outlets in the

Muslim world (Jones and Libicki, 133-135). While this is a war we are engaged, perhaps the U.S. characterization of this conflict as the War on Terrorism has given too much credence and status as holy warriors to those who should be classified as criminals.

Ending fascist ideology. The West can win "World War IV." Al-Qaeda is unlikely to overthrow any existing governments in the near term. And their propaganda campaign against the governments who tolerate the infidels have made enemies of most of the governments in the world. But our efforts to date have served only to prevent repeat attacks on U.S. soil. Al Qaeda has conducted more attacks and is present in more countries than prior to Sept. 11, 2001.

Western governments, militaries, police and intelligence services must understand the historical evolution of terrorism and jihadism in terms of ideology, political action and tactic employment. Westerners must take the politically correct blinders off and see a foe filled with hatred that opposes us and has a well-developed plan to take over the world. The world must espouse the ideal of tolerance of other cultures and religions. This with perseverance, diligence and patience will allow us to counter the latest perversion of fascist ideology.

Editor's note: This article was originally written for the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College.

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Moments in military history



In preparation for the invasion of Normandy, France, artillery equipment is loaded aboard landing craft tanks at an English port, June 1, 1944. (Photo courtesy of the U.S. Army Center of Military History)



These American troops are marching through the streets of a British port town on their way to the docks where they will be loaded into landing craft for the big assault at Normandy, France, June 1944. (Photo courtesy of the U.S. Army Center of Military History)